

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Charles J. Bell, April 3, 1892

(Copy) Parker House, Boston, Mass., April 3, 1892. Charles James Bell, Esq., 1327 Connecticut Ave., Washington, D. C. My dear Charley:

In the early days of the telephone, when telephone companies were first organized, I determined to give my interest in companies operating in foreign countries to members of my family. You may remember that I did so. I retained, however, in my own name 100 shares of the stock of the Continental Telephone Company, intending to present these shares as a testimony of regard to certain personal friends in Providence, R. I. I allude to Professor Pierce, Professor Eli W. Blake, and other gentlemen in Providence who were associated with them in experiments which they had been carrying on for the avowed purpose of helping me in perfecting the mechanical structure of the telephone. Their communications proved a source of great embarrassment to me, for they necessarily had to go over ground that I had long before traversed, and thus it happened that nearly all the points they communicated to me as original discoveries of their own had really long before been known to me. However, I recognized so fully the good will and generosity expressed by their experiments and letters to me that I resolved to show my appreciation by a gift of stock of the Continental Telephone Co. Prudence, however, dictated the plan of keeping this stock in my own name for some time, in order to ascertain whether they intended to make any claims upon me that would conflict with my own claim to be the first discoverer of what they had communicated to me. I therefore held the stock in my own name and said nothing about the disposition I intended to make of the shares. In case of accident or death, however, I prepared a short paper, which was filed away with other papers in a safe somewhere, and in this paper I stated the disposition that I desired to be made of these shares, and my reasons for the same. As I cannot now find this paper, I think it well to state these facts to you in black and white.

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When telephone litigation commenced, I saw that my motives for presenting stock to these gentlemen would be liable to gross misconstruction, and I was advised by my counsel not to do any such thing. I therefore did nothing, but let the stock remain AGB 3 in my own name. For many years it was my belief that the time would come when perhaps I might be able to present this stock to these gentlemen, and I thought that they would be pleased to know that I had from the first recognized their good will and desired to give them some practical testimony of my regard.

In process of time, the Continental Telephone Company sold out their rights in certain countries to the International Bell Telephone Company, and by virtue of my ownership of 100 shares of Continental stock, I found myself possessed of 40 shares of International Bell Telephone stock. Soon this Company began to pay dividends, but in my uncertainty as to what final disposition I should make of the shares, and for other reasons known to you, I never drew any dividends. This has been going on for a good many years, until now the amount of accrued dividends is so large as to make me feel it necessary to make a final disposition of the whole matter. I have finally decided that it would be extremely unwise upon my part to make any such recognition of the Providence gentlemen as I had intended, and I shall therefore distribute all the proceeds of these original 100 shares of Continental stock among personal friends who are near and dear to me. When I saw you last AGB 4 I gave you a paper transferring to your name the 40 shares of International Bell Telephone stock now standing in my name on the books of the Company, and gave you power of attorney to collect on your own behalf all the dividends that may have accrued. When you have done this, I desire you to make the following disposition of the shares and the dividends:—

SHARES.

I want you to transfer the shares to the following persons:

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To the Hon. Gardiner G. Hubbard, 10 shares, to be applied by him as my contribution towards the purchase of a farm for Major Powell.

To my cousin Noel Home, 9 shares; and tell him when you send them to him that I hope they will assist him in carrying out his plan of going to the Johns Hopkins University.

To the Hon. John Hitz, Superintendent of the Volta Bureau, 7 shares, as a testimony of my high regard for the work he has accomplished in building up the Volta Bureau.

To my old pupil George T. Sanders, 7 shares.

To my Private Secretary Mr. Arthur W. McCurdy, 7 shares. AGB

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To Hon. Gardiner G. Hubbard 10 shares

Noel Home 9 “

Hon. John Hitz 7 “

George T. Sanders 7 “

Arthur W. McCurdy 7 “

Total 40 “

### DIVIDENDS.

When you have collected all the dividends that have accrued from these shares, I desire you to retain five per cent of the amount as a commission for the trouble you have been at in managing this affair for me; and I desire you to hand over the balance of the amount to my father, Professor A. Melville Bell, to be applied by him to the purposes of the Volta

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Bureau, and especially to help defray the expenses of the second edition of the Helen Keller Souvenir and the printing and binding of the Royal Commission volume now about to be published by the Bureau.

I shall be glad to have your formal acknowledgement of this letter, and a statement that you agree to carry out my wishes in the matter.

Very sincerely yours, signed Alexander Graham Bell